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Global Gender Statistics Programme

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission at its forty-first session (see E/2010/24, chap. I.A). It summarizes the recent activities of the United Nations Statistics Division on gender statistics. It reports on the publication of *The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics*, and reviews the work accomplished jointly with other partners under the umbrella of the Global Gender Statistics Programme, in particular the organization of the third Global Forum on Gender Statistics and of the meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. Finally it outlines future activities of the Statistics Division for 2011-2012. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

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I. Introduction

1. The work of the Statistics Division on gender statistics was initiated in the early 1980s, at the midpoint of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976-1985). The first World Conference on Women in 1975 called for more statistics on the status of women, and the demands have grown further through three subsequent international conferences on women, and other United Nations conferences, such as the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 and the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. The work of the Statistics Division on gender statistics has been designed to address three main problem areas: (a) the need for gender-sensitive data-collection systems; (b) the limited availability and accessibility of gender statistics; and (c) the under-utilization of gender statistics. The Statistical Commission, at its forty-first session, requested gender statistics to be an agenda item for its forty-second session. The present report summarizes the recent work on gender statistics, accomplished by the United Nations Statistics Division and its partners.

II. Publication of *The World's Women 2010*

2. In the Beijing Declaration adopted in 1995 by the Fourth World Conference on Women, participating Governments expressed their commitment to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere, in the interest of humanity. In order to assess whether these goals are being achieved, the Statistics Division publishes its flagship report *The World's Women* every five years, as called for in the Beijing Platform for Action.[1]

3. The fifth and latest issue in the series, *The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics*, was launched simultaneously in New York, Shanghai and Bangkok on World Statistics Day (20 October 2010). The current issue presents statistics and analysis on the status of women and men in the world, highlighting the current situation and changes over time. It covers eight policy areas: population and families, health, education, work, power and decision-making, violence against women, environment and poverty. Analyses are based mainly on available statistics from international and national statistical sources. The draft was reviewed by relevant offices of the United Nations as well as by individual experts.

4. The report *The World's Women 2010* has benefited from an increase in the availability of gender statistics in the last 10 years. The majority of countries are now able to produce sex-disaggregated statistics on population, enrolment, employment and parliamentary representation. In addition, gender statistics in some newer areas are becoming available. For example, statistics on child labour are now collected by a larger number of countries. Similarly, surveys on time use and on violence against women were conducted in both developed and developing countries, although international standards in these two statistical fields have not yet been fully developed.

5. The preparation of *The World's Women 2010* was, however, hampered by the fact that statistics in certain domains are not available for many countries.

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, para. 208.

Furthermore, available data are often not comparable because concepts, definitions and methods vary from country to country. Data are also lacking in detail in many cases. Gender issues cannot be adequately reflected if existing sex-disaggregated statistics are classified into categories that are too broad or are not further disaggregated by relevant characteristics, such as age, residence or educational level. Finally, the quality of data varies across countries. One or more of the above-mentioned shortcomings are often encountered in data related to international migration, maternal mortality, causes of death, vocational education, access to and use of information and communication technologies, the informal sector and informal employment. The same is true of data on occupations, wages, unemployment and underemployment, decision makers in government and the private sector, and household poverty. In short, the capacity to produce reliable, accurate and timely statistics, in particular gender statistics, remains a formidable challenge for many countries.

III. Recent work under the Global Gender Statistics Programme

A. Background

6. Following the recommendations of an Inter-Agency and Expert Group Meeting on the Development of Gender Statistics, held in New York in 2006, the Statistics Division established a Global Gender Statistics Programme to advance gender statistics through the promotion of synergies among existing initiatives at the national, regional and global levels. The objective is to enhance the capacity of countries to collect, disseminate and use quality gender statistics through effective use of networking; building strong and supportive partnerships; establishing collaborative arrangement among governmental, intergovernmental, as well as individual experts; and fostering effective management and sharing of information among stakeholders.

7. Under the programme, the Global Forum on Gender Statistics has taken place on three occasions (Rome in December 2007; Accra in January 2009; and Manila in October 2010). The purpose of the Global Forum is to promote and advance gender statistics through the exchange of knowledge and experience in this field at the international, regional and national levels. It represents a venue for statisticians, users of statistics and policymakers to assess the production, availability and use of gender statistics.

8. In addition, an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, comprising representatives of the gender statistics programmes of international, regional and national institutions, was set up in 2007 to promote collaboration among the key stakeholders and to provide guidance to the programme on future directions. Its main tasks include taking stock, reviewing progress, challenges and emerging needs, and proposing actions to advance gender statistics at the international, regional and national levels. Current members of the Group include the United Nations Statistics Division, the World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations regional commissions, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Labour Office,

the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and 11 countries.[2] The Group has had three meetings, all immediately following each Global Forum.

9. To better organize its work, the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Gender Statistics has established three advisory groups, each composed of a small number of the Group members, to focus on three areas identified as key to the improvement of gender statistics. Each advisory group's function is to advise the Group on (a) the development of a global gender statistics and indicators database; (b) the development of training courses on gender statistics; and (c) best practices regarding statistical legislation on gender statistics.

B. The third Global Forum on Gender Statistics

10. The third Global Forum on Gender Statistics took place from 11 to 13 October 2010 in Manila. It was organized jointly by the United Nations Statistics Division and the National Statistical Coordination Board of the Philippines, in collaboration with the World Bank and with additional funding from the United Nations Development Programme. The Forum was attended by over 90 participants representing 31 countries and 11 United Nations agencies.

11. The focus of the 2010 Forum was on the gender dimensions of health statistics. Sessions included the measurement of maternal health and maternal mortality, disability, causes of death, caring responsibilities of women and men and related methodological advances. The Forum provided an opportunity for participants to learn of ways to strengthen their capacities in producing gender and health statistics. The Forum had the objective to review what needs to be done to improve gender statistics in general and health statistics in particular, in order to respond with a gender perspective to the monitoring requirements of international development goals.

12. The Forum recommended that countries and international development partners make efforts to strengthen overall national capacity for data analysis with a gender perspective; strengthen the capacity of health ministry to not only produce the necessary data but also to use, analyse and disseminate them; improve the use of gender-based health statistics to address policy concerns, formulate policies and change the focus of programmes; strengthen civil registration systems for the production of vital statistics; better integrate and harmonize data from different sources — administrative records, civil registration and surveys; promote the use of time-use surveys for the production of gender statistics; and promote the use of data-collection tools/surveys for gender-based violence. The full list of recommendations, including those specific to disability statistics, maternal health and mortality and time use statistics, is contained in the report of the third Global Forum on Gender Statistics.[3]

[2] Canada, Ghana, India, Italy, Jordan, Malawi, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, United States of America and Zimbabwe.

[3] Available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/Philippines_Globalforum_Oct2010/default.htm.

C. Third meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics

13. The third meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics took place on 14 October 2010 in Manila. A total of 23 participants representing seven countries and six international or regional organizations were in attendance.

14. The meeting reviewed the work of the three advisory groups and their work modalities. Members decided to trim the scope of work of the advisory groups on databases and on training, and discussed ways to ensure the active engagement of all group members. It was acknowledged that the recently established entity UN Women is an important member of the Group. The meeting also called for the expansion of the Group to include more countries.

15. The work for the year ahead will be largely on taking stock. Thus, on training, the work will focus on developing and creating a common repository system of all existing training material on gender statistics. On statistical legislation, the work will focus on gathering and summarizing information on national legislation relevant to gender statistics.

16. The Group reiterated the need for a core set of indicators on gender statistics that countries can use to assess progress towards international commitments and goals relating to gender equality. Thus, the advisory group on databases will focus its efforts on developing such a core set of indicators before the next meeting of the Group.

17. The Group urged the United Nations Statistics Division to push for the completion of the manual on gender statistics, the outline of which has been reviewed by the Group. The purpose of the manual is to train statisticians worldwide in the collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics. It was recognized that such a manual prepared for global use does not duplicate a training manual on gender statistics that was published by the Economic Commission for Europe in 2010, which focuses on the situation and needs of the developed regions.

IV. Other work of the United Nations Statistics Division on gender statistics

18. An important component of the work of the Statistics Division on gender statistics is the compilation and dissemination of gender statistics. The Division maintains a website entitled "Statistics and indicators on women and men", providing the latest sex-disaggregated data available in six specific fields of concern, namely, population, women and men in families, health, education, work and political decision-making. The data have been compiled from official national sources as well as international sources. The website is updated every six months.

19. Another component of the Division's work is methodological work in gender statistics. In this regard, the Division is compiling country experience in adopting the Trial International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics as part of its efforts to improve this classification. These efforts will feed into the revision of the classification, which will be presented to the Statistical Commission when completed.

20. The Statistics Division also serves as secretariat of the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on statistical indicators on violence against women. Their activities are contained in a separate report of the Friends of the Chair.

V. Future activities (2011-2012)

21. In the next biennium, the work of the Statistics Division on gender statistics includes the preparation of the following outputs:

- Guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women
- Revised International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics
- Gender statistics training manual

For each of the outputs, an expert review of the complete draft will be undertaken by an expert group meeting to ensure a high standard of quality and that the needs of all potential users are met.

22. The Statistics Division, in collaboration with relevant agencies and development partners and the host country, will convene the fourth Global Forum on Gender Statistics and the fourth meeting of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Gender Statistics in April or May 2012. Proposals for the venue and theme of the Forum have been put forward by the Group and will be decided in due time.

23. The Division will continue its ongoing work on the compilation and dissemination of gender statistics through its website (Statistics and indicators on women and men). It will continue to serve as secretariat of the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on indicators on violence against women. It will also continue to support the Global Gender Statistics Programme and the work of the Group, meaningfully engaging the new entity UN Women in this effort.